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THE POOL AT MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA  
BY ALEX. HARRISON. OWNED BY MRS. CHAUNCEY J. BLAIR, CHICAGO  
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# BRUSH AND PENCIL

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## ALEXANDER HARRISON—PAINTER

In the roll of honor of American artists the name of Alexander Harrison is worthily placed among the first. Not alone because he has been so profusely medaled and decorated, but because his art is important, his style is individual, and his influence is so considerable.

There are painters who may be called great whose art is so personal that it does not affect others to any extent. Turner, the great English landscape painter, might be thus considered. It is not so, however, with Harrison. He was fortunate in his environment and associates, he was in the movement inspired by Bastien Lepage, and carried on this liberating outdoor idea in art, influencing for the better all those who came within the sphere of his activity.

Harrison is essentially a modern painter,—modern in technique and sentiment. He holds no allegiance to the classic school. His art is based directly on nature, and his intention is to reproduce nature as simply and unconventionally as possible. Endowed with an artist's eye for color, Harrison has progressed steadily, until his art is accepted the world over as a splendid exponent of modern nature-interpretation. Harrison is not an idealist; he is neither a philosopher nor mystic; he sees directly and frankly, and reproduces his impressions with vigor, breadth, and simplicity. One can easily see how it is done. There is no trickery, no juggling, just straightforward painting.

As a colorist Harrison is pre-eminently a leader. A believer in the much-maligned and misunderstood principle of impressionism, he has never been a radical. His pictures are normal renderings, although they seemed at first very much forced and theoretical. We have advanced in our knowledge and appreciation of color and out-of-door effects, and Harrison has been one of our best teachers. He has been associated with leaders of modern and progressive ideas in Paris, has valiantly held his own with the best of them, and in the realm of color, of prismatic painting, has been the means of influencing, not alone his American friends, but the art of the continent where he has been a constant exhibitor for many years. A list of his recompenses will show how general has been not only his influence, but (what does not always follow) an appreciation of his artistic qualities as an out-door painter.

Before we go further let us insert a word or two of biographical data. Alexander Harrison was born in Philadelphia, Pa., January 17, 1853. For a season he was identified with the U. S. Coast Survey, but, like Whistler, left it to study art. He was for a short time in the schools of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, but soon left for Paris. He entered the École des Beaux Arts and studied with Gérôme, although no one would now suspect it. He first exhibited in the Salon in 1881, receiving an honorable mention in 1885. In the Exposition of 1889 he was given a first medal. He has been medaled also in Munich, Brussels, Ghent, Vienna, Dresden, Philadelphia, and Chicago. He wears the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor and was a charter member of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts—commonly called the New Salon. His brother, Birge Harrison, now making his home in Boston, is well known, and is a very successful painter. Another brother, Butler, whose sad end in England was much regretted, was a man of great promise in the art world also.

The following is a brief list of his pictures which have appeared in exhibitions: "Au Bord de la Mer," 1881; "Châteaux en Espagne," 1882, which suggests his sympathy and contact with Bastien Lepage in its minuteness of finish, delicacy of color, and refinement of treatment throughout; "Les Amateurs," 1883, owned by the Art Institute of Chicago; "The Bathers," exhibited at Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts about 1885, a magnificent picture for color and values, and which was unfortunately lost in a fire while on exhibition; "In Arcadia," a large canvas introducing the nude, which was exhibited in the Paris Exposition of 1889, and later in the World's Fair, Chicago; "Crepuscule," a beautiful marine; "Moonlight," owned by the St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts, and many others too numerous to catalogue. These give an idea of some of his larger works which have won for him his place as a painter and many medals and honors in the world of modern art.

The development of Mr. Harrison's art is interesting as we trace it from the dreaming boy on the beach in his "Châteaux en Espagne," so realistically treated; through "Les Amateurs," where we find greater breadth of treatment, a new style of composition, and fresher color, to the remarkable seashore pictures with which his present fame is so closely associated and in which we see the painter sporting with beautiful color, wonderful outdoor values and tones and great technical freedom. He is distinctly a painter, and many of his recent works are pictures of color rather than form. From the very beginning, however, Mr. Harrison's pictures have been interesting for their color, becoming more and more primitive and pure until some of his cherry-red sunsets, which represent his latest declarations, are very startling, and appeal, I fear, to a small, if select, circle of admirers. Harrison has never played to the galleries. He is faithful



THE RIVER LOING—EVENING  
BY ALEXANDER HARRISON  
COLLECTION OF MR. JOHN J. MITCHELL, CHICAGO

to his own desires and it is more than likely that it makes little difference to him what the mass of people think so long as he strike a true note and the most refined are satisfied. Many of his marines are popular and are known through reproductions in foreign as well as American publications. His canvases are large and important,



THE MYSTERIES OF THE NIGHT, BY ALEXANDER HARRISON

and it is fortunate that three important museums, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Chicago, have characteristic examples of his work. Harrison has been honored and patronized in his own country—he is a brilliant exception to the rule,—and in his recent exhibition in Chicago was remarkably successful in the number of his sales and in the character of his patrons. We reproduce a number of his most

recent canvases, fruits of a visit to picturesque California this last winter, in which we may be able to judge something of the breadth and simplicity of his design. His color is difficult to reproduce by photography, but we are able, thanks to the artist who was eager to see what could be done in a three-color reproduction, to show in color one of his best things, now the property of Mrs. Chauncey J. Blair, of Chicago. This reproduction has been shown to a number of artists and experts, and they all pronounce it a faithful suggestion of the original. It is fortunate that we can do even this, for any remarks on the art of Mr. Harrison without some idea of his color would be very unsatisfactory. We see at once the prismatic play of light, the splendid values and real suggestion of nature.

It would be hard to find in all the world a more direct and realistic transcript of nature, interpreted also with a fine artistic appreciation, than in this simple bit of water and tree-tufted bank. I know of nothing better for a student to study than work of this character. Nothing could excel the modeling and perspective of the receding bank, its freshness and life, the justness of relations of water, tree, and sky, the unconventionality of design, or the vigor, dash, and brilliancy of color.

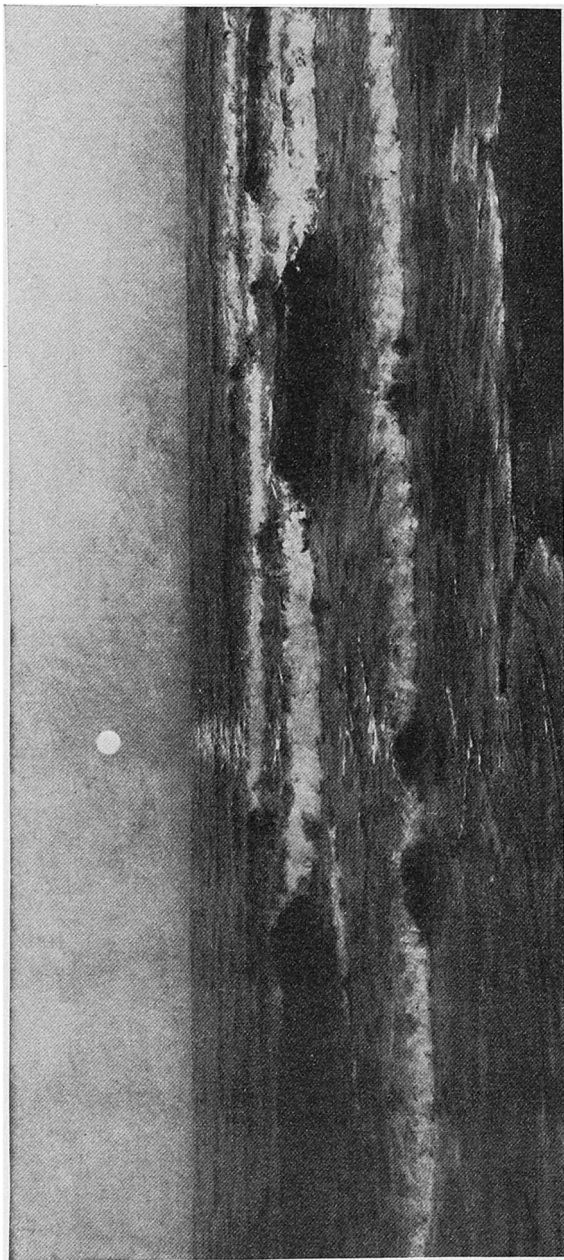
Mention was made above of his new style of composition. While not distinctly his, Harrison has used a high horizon, and in his recent exhibition nearly all his canvases had the horizon above the middle. This placing of the horizon is distinctly modern. The classic painters, Claude and Poussin, and their followers in this century, Turner and Corot, always have a lower horizon. The Dutch school are remarkable for the preponderance of sky to ground in their pictures—characteristic, of course, of their country. The painters of the last thirty years have been raising the horizon line until some pictures are designed with the horizon altogether above or outside the composition. In his surf pictures the beauty of the curling breakers and the flattened waves upon the beach are the interesting elements. They are in a sense foreground pictures, and large masses of sky would be superfluous. Harrison, by his searching study of the phenomena of wave formation, and reflections of sun, moon, and cloud upon the various surfaces of the incoming waters, has given us a new kind of picture, and has made himself a master in this class of subject. He is one of the best marine painters of his time, and as a painter of surf has no equal. It is in this line that Harrison has found his greatest popularity and fame. But the painter has handled other subjects with great individuality and success. In "In Arcadia," above mentioned, he has demonstrated his ability to treat the nude. Female figures are gracefully posed under sun-flecked trees, and the effect of outdoor light, the reflection of sky and tree, and the local color of flesh are wonderfully rendered. In his picture of "The Bathers" the same





THE RIVER LOING—LATE AFTERNOON  
BY ALEXANDER HARRISON  
COLLECTION OF MR. ROSWELL MILLER, CHICAGO





TWILIGHT (LA CREPUSCULE)  
BY ALEXANDER HARRISON  
COLLECTION OF SAINT LOUIS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

charm of color was to me even more beautifully depicted. Among the sand-dunes some boys were seen preparing for a plunge into the sea, which was breaking in on the beach and appearing through the low sand hills. In the foreground the boys were in shadow and the realism of tone and value, the delicacy and charm of color, and beauty of drawing were masterfully painted. Harrison was a pioneer in the plein-air school and it was a distinct loss to the history and development of modern painting when this masterpiece was consumed by iconoclastic flames. Dannat's "Quartette" and Harrison's "Bathers" opened the eyes of all who saw them in the early '80's to new problems in painting, and were the forerunners of a new art.



THE RIVER LOING—THE POOL, BY ALEXANDER HARRISON  
COLLECTION OF MR. JOHN S. RUNNELLS

From the very beginning of his career Harrison has been a leader, and so important was he considered that a number of American and English students besought him to teach them the secrets of values and color in which he so conspicuously excelled. His atelier, while it lasted, was the most enthusiastic place in Paris, and his students will always be grateful for what they learned under his guidance. Charles Rollo Peters, whose moonlights are making him a marked man, was one of Harrison's admirers.

In 1890 the revolt against the limitations of the old Paris Salon was made and the representatives of the new movement under the leadership of Meissonier founded the New Salon. Harrison was a charter member and served on the first jury. He has exhibited with them ever since with the exception of last year, when he made his first extended visit to America. This visit has so awakened his

dormant patriotism that he is considering making the United States his permanent home.

The time is propitious. His fame is assured, for it has the foreign *cachet* deemed necessary by our American patrons; there is a growing interest in American art; our country is as varied and beautiful as any under the sun; and the great painters who bear an American name will win everlasting honor if they will return and work in the harvest fields that are ripening for them.

We honor Alexander Harrison for the fame he has won for himself and America. We invite him to his own country and promise him a field of usefulness and glory such as he has never known before. His continued absence would be a misfortune, while his coming will be a national blessing.

CHARLES FRANCIS BROWNE.



### MY INDIAN PORTRAITS

Down from my study walls they gaze,  
These grave, grim men of alien race;  
They make me dream of some dim forest maze  
Or wild trail leading on to wilder place.

I hear the clear call of the woodland bird,  
The soft tread of the shy, quick deer;  
The swift rush of the frightened pony herd,  
The low chant of some mystic, spellbound seer.

From that dark frame a brave old warrior looks  
His calm disdain upon my pampered ease,  
Till I could trade my easy-chair, my books,  
For mat of rushes by the brown tepees.

I like him best; that proud old chief  
His glance is stern, yet half benign;  
The mighty tempest of an awful grief  
His face has marked with many a deep-plowed line.

Through the grim wisdom of his piercing eyes  
I seem to see a noble manhood shine;  
Where bitterness wrapt round with silent patience lies,  
And faith o'erreaching mine or thine.

They give me strength, each pictured face,  
They teach me scorn of petty ills,  
And courage to press onward in the race,  
Up to the summit of life's highest hills.

—AVILDA KELTON LEE.